

INSIDE: WOODEN SCULPTURE, LAPTOPS, IDENTITY THIEVES

THE BELL RINGER

Montgomery Bell Academy

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AP Exam Month Makes Annual Trip to MBA

by ERICH GEMEYER
Features Editor

It doesn't take a genius to see it: May at MBA is the most hectic month of the year, both for teachers and for students. The reason for our frenzied schedules at the end of the year undoubtedly has a lot to do with Advanced Placement exams in the first two weeks of the month and the time allotted for students to prepare for them. But to some on campus, the College Board seems to control more than just these two weeks. Students and teachers alike in most AP classes are made constantly aware of what they have to do by the end of the

year to prepare students for the test. Admittedly, we do very well on these tests every May, but at what cost?

Because of our legacy as a school within the AP system, students have obviously achieved a level of comfort with taking AP classes and thus with taking the tests at the end of the year. As Mr. Womack put it, "Our policy has always been that if you take an AP class, you take an AP test." In other words, since the student is expected to take a comprehensive test, it is the teacher's responsibility to make it as little of a surprise as possible. Some students who understand this principle notice certain nuances in AP teachers'

styles—commonly describing them as "teaching to the test."

"We're not teaching to the test," Dr. Shackelford says, "because the College Board gives us a list of everything we have to teach to be a legitimate AP program. I tell my students what's on that list...some teachers may not, but I guarantee they know what they have to teach." With this fact comes a subtle difference in AP teaching styles. Some teachers are more likely to give sample questions from past exams because they could be relevant to the

class, but others may refrain from this because there may be other ways to prepare students. There is room for a teacher to personalize an AP course, but because of the standardized test, it is hardly enough.

As David Reynolds said, "AP's run our lives. Every day in Mr. Caldwell's class we know exactly what we have to do." Many students can tell from their teachers that the curriculum in these courses is highly compromised. David also commented, "Do you think Mr.

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 **CollegeBoard**
Advanced Placement
Program

LACROSSE WINS STATE TITLE



Sacrificing their Steeplechase Saturday, MBA beat McCallie 9-7



Junior Greg Harbison of the Big Red soccer team strikes again (see article at right)

Soccer Strikes Hard

Coach Cheevers joins Lanier, adds "fire"

by ANDREW GIBBS
Staff Writer

Can you feel it? Have you noticed MBA athletes dominating once again? Does another state championship seem to be on its way? It's that time of year. Big Red Futbol season.

The 2006 soccer team has rolled through their season, developing into a threat across the mid-state. A team that was unsure of itself in preseason has found an identity and swagger. Coach Lanier has teamed with Coach Cheevers, who landed on the Hill from Ireland, to lead the Big Red to one of its best seasons in the last few years. Lanier's brilliant strategy and insight of the game have molded well with Cheevers' fire and passion for winning. Cheevers has enjoyed his first year on the Hill. He says with a distinct accent, "It has been a pleasure working with each and every one of the lads. It's been a worthwhile experience for me, and I hope it has been the same for them." The odd couple in the coaching staff has proved to be vital to the success of the team.

The squad has produced on the field as well. The team worked hard in the months prior to the season to become the team they are now. Coach Cheevers pushed the Big Red in a grueling Irish conditioning program. Once the players bought into the Irish diet of Lucky Charms, raw potatoes, and, surprisingly,

bananas, improvements became obvious. The 2006 squad puts out a solid eleven for every game. Jordan Dockery, Weston Cowden, Clayton Foster, and Greg Harbison anchor the defense. Both Joseph Alexander and Trey McMinn have been tremendous in the goal. The midfield is commanded by Zach Richardson and Houston Oldham, while Eric Beiter and Tyler Yarbrough control the wings. Up top, Jordan Keckley and Alexander Darsinos do the bulk of the goal scoring. A bench full of role players rounds the 2006 MBA Soccer Team out.

The team's first real test was against highly rated Hendersonville. The team played with determination and proved they could play with anyone as they rolled over the enemy 5-0. Alexander Darsinos, the leading goal scorer for MBA, went absolutely berserk with a hat trick. The talented forward has shown his magic repeatedly this year. Coach Lanier added, "It goes without saying that Alex has been tremendous this year."

The team continued to practice hard, determined to get better every day. They got off to a great start with four wins. After suffering their first defeat of the year to Pope John Paul II in a tough game, the Big Red rebounded with a huge win against BA the next night. Both teams battled late into the game before Jordan Keckley scored on a game-winning

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The Bell Ringer Receives Tennessee High School Press Association 2006 Newspaper Awards

HIGH SCHOOL NEWSPAPER AWARD, 2006

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INDIVIDUAL NEWSPAPER RECOGNITIONS

First Place Awards:

David Wheeler, "Life of Pi Finds Life at MBA," News Article

Tommy Corts, "Best Homecoming Date Ever," Cartoon

Second Place Awards:

Eric Hagemeyer, Hunter Kopald, Tommy Corts

Third Place Awards:

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Justin Hall, Travis Brannon, Kevin Seitz (2), David Reynolds

Of 25 entries, 48% received recognition

QUESTIONS? COMMENTS?
OPINIONS? IDEAS?

bellringer@fc.montgomerybell.com

Advanced Placement

Continued from p.1

Womack would teach stuff he didn't like if he didn't have to? In a lot of classes, you can tell we're not going into depth." This phenomenon of supposedly college-level courses that only scratch the surface of the topic is referred to jokingly by Mr. Womack as "waterskiing." "Every now and then you fall down and dip your head under the water," Mr. Womack says.

Across the board MBA has some of the finest teachers in the nation, and yet on some level their passion for their subjects is compromised by a need to cover the requirements of their course and match it as well as possible to the details of the test. The goal of all AP teachers is for the students to pass the test with a 3 or better (we have been successful over the years, with 90% of students in recent times achieving this mark, according to Dr. Shackelford, our AP coordinator), but again, at what cost? The College Board has boiled success in a college-level class down to a five-point scale; thus teachers believe in the AP program because it gives efficient results about a student's proficiency in a certain subject. The problem with this system, it seems, is shared among all educational establishments.

Just as it has affected schools in recent years, grade inflation has also hit the Advanced Placement system. Mr. Giffen commented on this trend from a historical perspective: "Getting an 'X' score now is not the same as it was twenty years ago...Harvard

gave credit for a 3...it was the standard for a rigorous course." Standards have shifted from being truly college level because of the so-called "equity in access" philosophy, which says that AP tests should be open to anyone who wants to take them for college credit; however, with more college-bound students today, more students are "wedging themselves into AP's just for the transcripts," as Mr. Giffen says. "AP's were not and are still not required for admission to college."

**90% of MBA students
make a score of 3 or
better on AP exams.**

he says, "but if you don't have them, you are probably at a disadvantage in the college process." Students today know about AP courses and understand how much weight they carry in the college community. As a result of this proliferation, AP distinctions on students' transcripts have become the norm, but they hardly mean as much as they did a generation ago.

Recently, the College Board has become a for-profit organization. Teachers across the country are lamenting this change, but some at MBA, like Dr. Shackelford and Mr. Womack, are not. They believe the Advanced Placement system will continue to be legitimate because the College Board will have to produce a quality product. Opinions aside, however, the College Board's shift to this style of business marks its public realization that AP exams are now a standard part of students' plans to attend college.

Dr. Kent D. Syverud Chosen to Speak at MBA Commencement



photo courtesy of: VULS

Kent D. Syverud has established an extraordinary reputation in the law community for his tremendous scholarship.

He joined Vanderbilt University Law School as dean and the Garner Anthony Professor of Law in 1997, and is currently the dean of the School of Law at Washington University in St. Louis.

He has served as the chair of the Law School Admissions Council's Board of Trustees, and president of the American Law Deans Association.

His son Steven was editor-in-chief of *The Bell Ringer* of the MBA Class of '02. His son Brian graduated Class of '05, and David is a current senior, Class of '06.

MBA STUDENT ART EXHIBIT

in the Davis Hallways
April 30 - May 21, 2006



William Schuller, Art IV AP



Matt Kimball, Art III



Randy Bedrin, Art III

Unique Forms in Wood: Art I on Campus

by Mr. John Frost
Ms. Catharine Hollifield
Mr. Jim Womack
MBA Art Department

What is it? What is it for? Why are you making it? Where did all that wood come from? What are all those "wooden things"?

These are some of the questions raised by those "wooden things" that have recently started to appear scattered around the campus. The fact that people are asking questions and acknowledging their presence means that these unusual pieces of "yard art" are serving their

the works of art they decided the trees could not be used.

This opportunity resulted in the sculptures that will be completed by next week. The six Art I classes were presented with the problem of creating a collaborative outdoor public sculpture. The initial assignment was to create a work that conceptually referenced the idea of "shelter" and related to the landscape and/or architecture of the campus. In a sense the works are site-specific. The guys surveyed the campus, did preliminary drawings of their personal ideas, and presented them to the class. The class discussed and voted on the design that was the most interesting.

as an object, the design considered the juxtaposition of the machined wood versus the natural wood. Movement, shape, direction, form, volume, craftsmanship all entered into the form of the finished project. As we all know, ideas were adjusted as the work came into fruition.

It is a rare opportunity to be able to work in this scale and in an outdoor setting. Compare the objects with their settings. How do they relate to their locations? To what extent do these objects represent or remind you of anything? How does it force you to look at the campus landscape as a setting for these objects? Think about the way these forms work with their setting in comparison to the more traditional



A giant arch in the Davis Courtyard is still under construction, a joint effort of the ten students in Mr. Frost's third period class.

purpose. Art not only represents, it exists in its own right as an object.

In the early winter the Art department was presented with the opportunity to acquire approximately 400 nine foot poplar trees (poles) from the Frist Center for the Visual Arts. Originally the Frist Center ordered the small Georgian forest to enhance an installation of African Art, exhibited earlier this year. However, due to the possible detriment that insects and disease might cause to

Practicality was also a concern. The following weeks saw each group, under the direction of a project manager, work toward making their projects a reality. Size was a huge consideration, forcing each class to think "outside of the box." Inside a room or the shop of the theater, the object looked huge. Outside, they shrink. In addition to the natural wood, the only other materials used were manufactured dowels (donated by the Madison Mills near the 42nd Street fields). Talking about it

sculptural images on campus of the Teacher and Student, Sam Davis, or the Tommy Owen work by the football field. As sculptural pieces, how do they each address their setting?

MBA is fortunate to have a very grassy, wooded campus with large vistas and points of visual interest. These works in some way either add to, question, or focus our attention to these areas we often take for granted.



Works by Mr. Womack's first and second period students, now completed, greet visitors approaching from Montgomery Bell Avenue

THE BELL RINGER

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Seniors Lead Baseball Into Strong Postseason

by Allen Riley
Sports Editor

The 2006 MBA baseball team wrapped up their regular season Saturday with a tough loss to Father Ryan. However, MBA took 2 out of 3 in the Ryan series to secure a #2 seed in the DII Middle Region tournament. Currently, the Big Red is 22-9 and 10-5 in the division. MBA has won every series except against BGA, where they avoided a sweep with a come-from-behind win in Franklin.

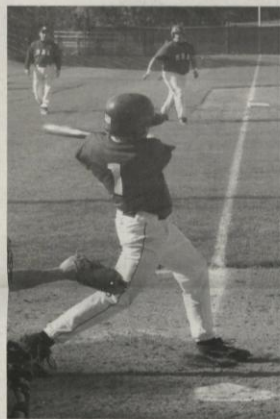
The season has been dominated by the seven starting seniors. Michael

Crum has been exceptional on the mound, leading the team to victories over BGA, JP11 and Father Ryan. After the Father Ryan series, senior Nick Power, who leads the team in almost every offensive category, said, "Nothing else matters now that we are in the tournament. Every team has beaten up on each other and it's going to be a dogfight for the region title."

Gaining the #1 seed out of the middle region would be pivotal for the Big Red because the #2 and #3 seeds are in the same bracket as perennial power Memphis Christian Brothers. The defending champs out of the west boast a 32-1 record and are ranked nationally. Senior Andrew Warfield commented, "Christian Brothers has a lot more talent that we do, but when we put it all together, we're tough to beat." McCallie and Knoxville Webb are the two likely teams out of the east region who will qualify for the Spring Fling in Murfreesboro.

MBA kicks off play at home against USN and will most likely host another game until the final four teams are selected and play the championship series at BGA with the top three teams going to the state tournament. Catcher Brooks Tate says, "When our pitching, defense, and hitting are all clicking, we're very tough to beat." The Big Red has qualified for state in 4 of the past 5 years. Come out and support the Big Red as they make their quest for a second state title in three years.

[See final issue for season wrap-up in all sports.]



Senior Andrew Warfield takes a "good cut"

Big Red Soccer

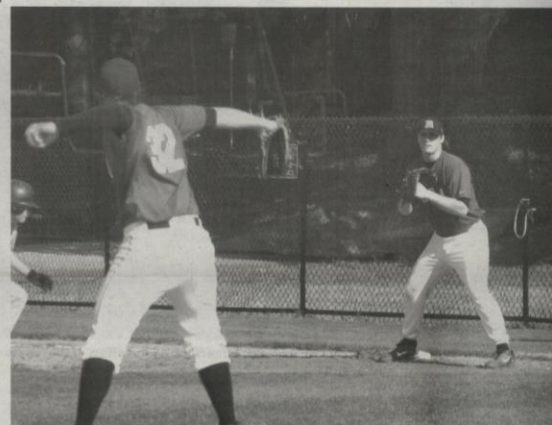
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header delivered by Zach Richardson. SICK! Both players have played major roles in the team's success. "Zach's play in the midfield has been sensational", added Coach Lanier. Richardson is the heart and soul of the team and is consistently the Man of the Match.

Rolling through the season, the Big Red took their win streak into Alabama to play highly regarded Grissom (24-3). Despite trailing at halftime, the Big Red rallied behind Darsinos' two goals. An inspiring speech at halftime resulted in spirited play and a win. The team also won an important game at BGA. On a Friday night, the two teams battled in an exciting, fast-paced game. With the score tied at 1 apiece, Brandon Harrington punched one in for the win in the closing minutes.

With a record of 10-1, MBA was stung in an Invitational at Memphis. They played against some of the top teams in the state and dropped 2 out of 3 matches. Despite suffering two losses, the team came out of the weekend with some positives. The experience of playing against such tough opponents will reward the Big Red in the State Tournament. Coach Lanier said, "It's very important that we continue to play team ball if we want to advance into the postseason."

The team bounced back in an important victory over Franklin. Now, the footballers look forward to competing against the best in the state in pursuit of a title. Coach Cheevers believes the team will see more wins this year and in the future. The Irishman declares, "I hope that we can achieve the ultimate goal of taking this soccer program and turning it into a powerhouse at MBA."



Senior Michael Crum catches a baserunner from Father Ryan off-guard

Compliments of a Friend

From a Member of the MBA Class of '63

MBA Considers Laptop Program

by **NICHOLAS CAPRIOLI**
Staff Writer

One of the most contested issues in the MBA community revolving around technology is the proposed "Student Laptop Program." Presumably, it would be modeled after Harpeth Hall's system, where at a certain grade, every student is given a laptop to "enhance [their] educational experience." Many people at MBA are assessing whether the laptops

would be an educational tool or a tool for abuse.

From my own experience, I would vote in favor of student laptop. My laptops, has played a major role in my academic life. For one thing, I have become more organized, as my laptop integrates an instant search technology enabling me to search for any document using only the title, date created, or just a few words in the document. Also, student laptops would lighten the load of the backpacks because many papers and

binders could be consolidated into a five-pound package.

Theft is one concern. Several (I actually believe that the count is now seven) laptops have been stolen from the hallways during lunch periods. While I find it very hard to believe that there are random strangers on campus combing the halls and courtyards for laptops, I guess that anything is possible. Security of the laptops would be an issue, but not one that is insurmountable.

Hypothetically, if the school were to adopt a laptop program, several other issues still remain. First, the hardware would need to be settled on. The new MacBook Pros (Apple's update to the PowerBook line) and presumably the MacBooks (Apple's speculated update to the iBook line, which had not been formally announced at press time) operate both Windows XP and Mac OS X 10.4 "Tiger," thus effectively eliminating the Windows vs. Mac argument, and leaving the user to decide on which he wishes to use. While to the consumer they may not be the most cost-effective laptop, Apple does give educational discounts to schools, and bulk orders also get discounts, which would shave thousands of dollars off the cost of the program for MBA.

The entire school would also need to be configured for a wireless Internet connection. Parts of campus are already wireless, but only to the people who know the SSIDS and passwords of the WPA encryption. In English, they've hidden the network from anyone's computer not OK'd by the Tech Department. A campus-wide wireless network would enable access to printers and network resources from any point on campus. Sources have confirmed that the Tech Department is, in fact, working on Campus-Wide Wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity, synonymous with wireless internet connection) that would be available to students. This would be secured to a program that ensures any computer which wants access to the Wi-Fi has up-to-date virus protection. In fact, the interconnected wireless campus may actually happen in the lifespan of our MBA lives.

While I do believe that a student laptop program would benefit MBA, I realize and recognize the fact that not everyone likes using a laptop in class. After listening to several members of each class, I have come to the conclusion that each student should have the option of having a laptop, but should not be forced into using one. A school-based and school-financed distribution program would make this option available to any student who wants to connect to the projected campus-wide network both in and outside of the classroom.

Quirks on Campus

by **CLAYTON COTHMAN**
Staff Writer

During the school day, the students at MBA talk about many different things, but a prominent topic of discussion is, of course, how much better their teachers could be. Most students think they could teach, talk, and even walk better than their teachers, and sometimes...they're right. The students have a lot to say about the teachers, but what do the teachers say about the students? They have similar conversations, talking about how weird and strange their students are. Here is what the students have to say (they have been kept anonymous to protect their demerit record):

"I know a teacher who bounces when he talks." - a freshman

"There's one teacher who refuses to talk for whole class periods, he only writes things down and gestures." - a freshman

"One teacher wastes more time telling us we waste more time than actually teaching." - a freshman

"I know one who gives lessons to the whole class on how to use a door." - a freshman

"One teacher savors Latin more than life itself." - a freshman

"I know one teacher who says 'Buhhurr!!' while he's walking around." - a sophomore

"There's a teacher who gives an outline for a test or an exam, and then changes the test!" - a freshman

"There's one who threatens to give demerits if someone won't take a Kleenex." - a freshman

But what do the teachers have to say about the students? What do the students do every day that drives the teachers crazy (besides everything)? Here's what I heard from the teachers:

"Some students constantly ask, 'What page are we on?' when going over the previous night's homework, as if it has never been looked at before." - a Latin teacher

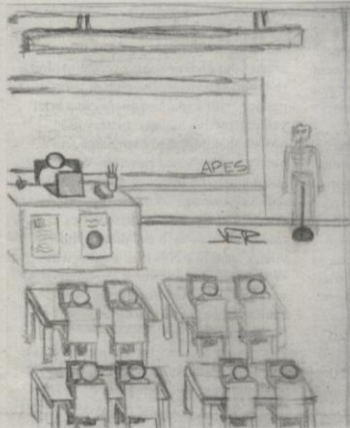
"Students always make weird noises when out in the hall and sometimes even in class." - a Math teacher

"Students just need to understand that class participation and their grade are related." - an English teacher

"Most students come in after a day absent and ask, 'When do you want me to make up the test?', when they are really able to decide for themselves when they can take the test." - a Latin teacher

"Some students just won't shut up!" - an English teacher

Well, there you go. The students have a lot to say about the teachers, and the teachers have a great deal to say about the students, too. But really, why do teachers do all that stuff?



SteaknShake: AnYbodY kNo hOW tO gEt On FaCeBook? **UltimateFighter:** can i borro some paper?

pDrAuRiWtItN: Stifle, that'll stunt ur growth!

Pete Long-Innes: Anybody see American Idol last nite?

JackBauer: so, where's the nervegas?

pDrAuRiWtItN: On a scale of one to self-regulating organisms...

JackBauer: JACK BAUER!

EreSwinn: NOONE CARES!

Reedle: Chinese Kitchen, 4th period, anyone?

2Tall signed on at 11:23:34 a.m.

2Tall: Has anyone seen Scott?

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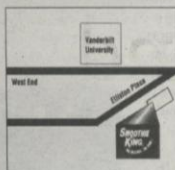
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Cut me out And SAVE!

What It Takes: Facing MBA on Mondays

An opinion on assembly speakers who succeed and those who do not

by DAVID REYNOLDS
Staff Writer

As the entertaining events of a weekend begin to recede into hippocampi and students embark upon their first and second period classes, the prospect of attending the weekly Monday morning assembly looms over the minds of the gentleman here at Montgomery Bell Academy. Some optimistically anticipate the gathering in hope of the elusive brand of speaker that is both articulate and intriguing, while others resign themselves to expect monotony, forty minutes spent in an attempt to salvage some needed sleep. Regardless, as each locates his assigned seat in the theater, all would agree that some moments and speeches transcend the traditional stereotype of the MBA assembly and truly captivate the student body and faculty.

As vibrant young men gather, intense flashes of excitement greet moments that mix comedic originality with spontaneity. The main case in point of such a circumstance transpired at an early September Monday gathering in which Mr. Gioia delegated the duty of reciting recent athletic scores to Student Body President, Deon Gaines. I believe we can all recall the distinct flair and unique method Deon chose in his announcement, using such key phrases as "That's dirty, I like that" to captivate the audience with a spike of humor in the normally dull Junior Varsity and Microbe athletic announcements. The buzz in the crowd ambling away from the theater was not the typical euphemistic commentary on the content of assembly,

but excitement over the unexpected and unbridled wit in the formal program of assembly. Unfortunately, like many other novel hilarities, this talent was promptly over-used as Deon was made to repeat the act again and again, hoping to spark some life into the normally passive spectators. Our collective attention span is a fickle beast. Thus, other examples such as Chip's beat boxing ability and various teacher impersonators fell to the same fate of over-repetition.

Of course, our assembly speakers are selected to educate and expand horizons rather than to merely amuse and entertain, so humor will rarely be the primary focus of MBA assemblies. When we were privileged to have such distinguished speakers as a public relations staff member for President Clinton, the popular novelist Michael Crichton, or World War II veteran Joe Thompson, comedy obviously has no expected place during their comments. When asked about the selection of the various speakers, Headmaster Bradford Gioia clearly seeks those who will stimulate and intrigue the entire audience, junior school through the upper-classmen. "It's important that we don't have to go to the lowest denominator...there ought to be that gradation (of understanding). I say, 'Let's get something the 12th graders can enjoy, and let the 7th graders reach for it,'" he said. Prominence, unfortunately, does not always capture adolescent minds, however, so speakers here have achieved varying degrees of success through

combining several of the following aspects: conciseness, passion, confidence, and stimulation of conversation.

The millennium culture of ADD and MTV where the norm is jumping from website to website and channel to channel will present the greatest challenge for any lecturer. "You need to sort of keep flowing," said Mr. Gioia. "The people that fail the most are the ones that preach too much—it's more important to let them (MBA students) make up their own minds than be told what to think." It is in the very nature of MBA students to analyze the speaker and his or her words, which often means facing initially cynical, if not critical attitudes as one takes the podium. "People like to be entertained," Gioia continued, and too often if this desire is not immediately met, an extraordinary speaker with exceptional points may be tuned out by many without the motivation of a grade or tangible requirement. Without a silver tongue or a magician (or a performer of some sort) behind the podium, at fifteen minutes, eyelids begin to droop and the initial energy dissipates from the audience. A quick glance around the theater reveals slouching in chairs and transfixed gazes along with open mouths, the unanimous facial expression, which is truly intimidating to many speakers. Even if the subject is one of particular interest to me, I sometimes find myself doing the same during a long speech due to the timing of assembly at the start of another school week after an exhausting weekend.

The most pivotal determinant of success seems to rest upon whether the

speaker generates controversy and debate in his or her points or theories. Numerous memorable examples of this argument have arisen in assembly. For example, Michael Crichton initiated a tremendous amount of uproar and consideration among all of us scholars when he seemed to contradict science in his reasoning over whether events in his best-selling pop novels were plausible or not. An honest, upfront approach also seems effective at capturing attention, as Mr. Gioia said: "I know they appreciate it to be as genuine as you can; students respect that."

As for student announcements, the art of delivering a successful blurb about your club or sport's recent exploits relies on expressing the club or sport's passion with a spark of energy in a brief yet informative manner; history has proven that poor body language and a barely audible voice generally do not accomplish the intended purpose. Why did everyone pay close attention to debate results in the past? The answer lies in catchy phrases such as "pillage the village" and Ben Newman's quick wit. Why does everyone know the times of AP sessions? Dr. Shackleford's brief yet extremely lively and calculated declarations.

At Monday morning assemblies, countless speakers have begun their presentations with comments on the unique nature of the student body assemblies. Indeed, as a public forum of hundreds of individuals, these school-wide gatherings offer tremendous potential for the exchange of ideas for those willing to take advantage of it.

Athletes Juggle Time, School, Hobbies

by JUSTIN HALL
Sports Editor

Let's face it: sports take up time. Football players lose their summer. Wrestlers lose their winter break and any hope of going to winter formal. Baseball players and lacrosse players alike lose part of their coveted spring break. Basketball players lose the post-exam relaxation time. Countless athletes lose not just precious break time, but sleep time, study time, and family time as well.

Being an athlete requires much more than just practice and game time. To be truly competitive at the high school level, an athlete must put in extra hours for morning workouts, learning the ins and outs of the game, travel, and anything else to make you a better competitor. Which leads to my question: is it worth it?

For well-rounded gentlemen, scholars, and athletes, the answer should be no, because learning to be gentlemanly and scholarly deserves more time and attention. In the real world, however, the priorities are far more difficult to align. The reality is that most high school athletes, regardless of the school they attend, spend a lot of time on sports. Tack this onto the seven- to eight-hour day

required of each student at school, and life becomes busy. Very busy.

"With practices not ending until around 7 at night and games that go even later, basketball takes up a lot of time," says senior Deon Gaines, who earned his 1000th career point this year. "When you have a game at Mt. Juliet at 8 pm on a theme night, things get tough."

Two-sport athlete James Banker also weighed in on the issue of time consumption: "For football you have morning and preseason workouts around the clock. It cuts into your sleep more than your social or academic life. But in lacrosse, it eats more into my social life because of weekend games/trips and of course, there's the spring break trip."

Despite the demands on one's free time, most athletes don't mind the work and drain. Freshman hockey goalie John Vorholt comments that, "hockey requires extra practice to get quicker and better outside of the rink. Yeah, I lose time from my family but they support me in everything that I do. Besides, hockey is my life, so I don't really care how much time it takes." Fellow freshman three-sport athlete Patrick Hallahan adds, "Besides, what would I do with the extra time? That would be way too much free time on my hands."

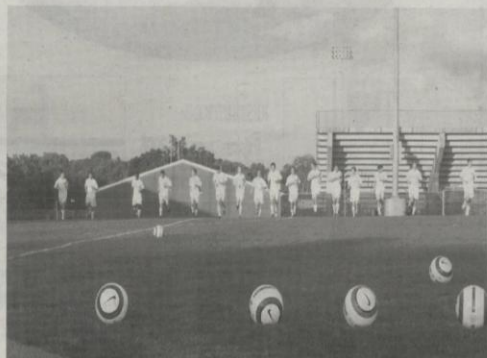
Sports obviously require sacrifices from their athletes. The high level of performance that sports demand absolutely requires the hours and practice to perform at the highest possible levels. The mainstream emphasis on professional sports and the exorbitant sums of money dolled out to these athletes for their performance only enhance the emphasis on sports in our daily lives.

The trend towards spending most of one's free time on sports shows no signs of slowing down. Junior Steve

Dolan says that despite the time commitment of being a three-sport athlete, he enjoys "the structure provided in my life around sports. It makes things very uncomplicated, which is good for The Steve. The

dampener sports put on my social life and sleep time really aren't that big a deal."

So sports require time. That's a reality. And they will continue to require more and more time. Kids are starting at earlier ages to focus on single sports to be successful later in life. College athletics are literally a business. But is it a problem? Surely athletes will decide when the price of competing is too high for them. And that really is the only answer: decide what works for you and go with it.



Risking It All: Steroids Threaten Baseball

by JEFF EBERLE
Staff Writer

Baseball is America's National Pastime. Its history is richer than the darkest chocolate. From the Babe hitting monstrous home-runs to the dust coming off the mitt of a Nolan Ryan 100 mph fastball, this game is full of tradition. It has had its ups and downs, surviving scandals such as the 1919 Black Sox scandal when nine players on the Chicago White Sox threw the World Series, to the astonishment of Pete Rose, the all-time hit king, betting on baseball.

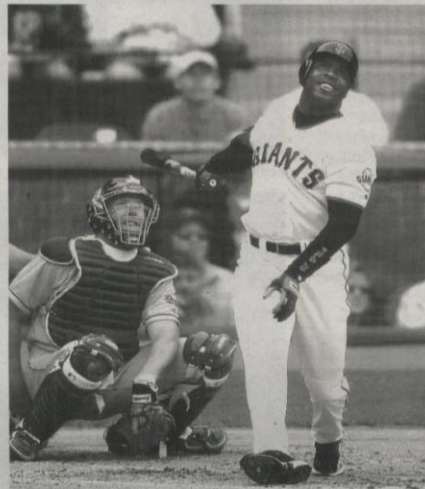
Writer and avid fan of the sport, W.P. Kinsella, in his novel *Shoeless Joe*, states "I don't have to tell you that the one constant through all the years has been baseball. America has been erased like a blackboard, only to be rebuilt and then erased again...It is a living part of history, like calico dresses, stone crockery, and threshing crews eating at outdoor tables. It continually reminds us of what once was, like an Indian-head penny in a handful of new coins."

But can baseball survive the steroid issue that has recently once again questioned the integrity of the game? Almost every boy in America grows up dreaming of playing in the seventh game of the World Series. They too see how players in major league baseball have used steroids as an enhancement to hit more home-runs, drive in more runs, and hit for a higher average. So will teenagers at the high-school level wish to partake in the use of performance-enhancing drugs to make it to the big leagues?

It is known that a number of high-school athletes turn to steroids in the hope that they can get the extra edge in beating the competition. There have been reports that teenagers have committed suicide because of the depression that is induced by steroids. Teens still lean toward steroids in order to follow that dream of someday stepping foot onto a major league field. They have seen the on-the-field success by players like Mark McGuire and Sammy Sosa, who in 1998 both broke the single season home-run record, and in the process have been accused by the media and fans of taking steroids.

High-school students see the accolades that these professional athletes get, not only with the success that comes with being a great player, but the money in the contracts they sign because of how well they produce in addition to by the off-the-field endorsement deals that bring in the big dollar. A senior baseball player at Ravenwood high school says, "Obviously I think the steroid issue is bad, but I can understand why they do it. There is so much pressure on them that any edge must look nice. As a high school player, I have not been influenced at all to use steroids because I want my accomplishments to be legitimate." Brooks Tate, MBA Class of '06, thinks,

"Steroids are unhealthy for your body. If an athlete takes them, it does not create a level playing field." Jon Eisen ('08) agrees, saying, "Steroids in high school baseball



A bulked-up Bonds chases Babe Ruth amidst avid controversy

are terrible. There should definitely be a steroid testing policy for high school sports."

So if players are not easily persuaded to partake in the use of enhancing drugs, what about fans? Do fans care whether the game they are watching is played between clean, proven players or by built-up cheats who ruin the integrity of the game? The general public does not care. Attendance at major league games has been at an all-time high this past season according to Commissioner Bud Selig. But what about the average high school student, and does the steroid issue draw away the average teen fan? One teenager says, "Steroid use has caused me to respect athletes less, particularly those in major league baseball."

No wonder why the National Football League is so popular to everybody in recent years. It is because they have a strict steroid and drug testing policy for their players. Congress has had to urge major league baseball to get their act together by putting in place a plan to punish positively-tested players. Have teenagers been driven away from our country's pastime because of the steroid issue? Do most high-school players want to use performance-enhancing drugs in order to make the team, get the best stats, be recruited by the colleges and, in essence, be the best that they can be?

To the average teen, the ones who don't play baseball, steroids have caused them to turn their backs on the game, a decision which might lower attendance at games and leave baseball scarred for life.

Schwartz Defends Barry Bonds

by SCOTT SCHWARTZ
Staff Writer

Barry Bonds has become one of the most controversial figures in sports. His steroid use has put his greatness in jeopardy. Critics love to hate Bonds for his destruction of the sanctity of the game, his harshness towards the media, and his lack of hustle in the field. After being forced to stop taking steroids this off-season, Barry Bonds has failed to produce the power numbers that have defined him over the bulk of his career, so far this year only hitting .237 with a measly 5 home runs. Many fans and analysts are quick to criticize Bonds' slow start, attributing his lack of production to the fact that he is

playing without steroids. However, despite his decrease in power numbers,

Barry Bonds is still the most feared hitter in the game.

Barry Bonds' low power numbers do not tell the whole story. What many don't realize is that Bonds has a .500 on-base-percentage, the fourth highest in the league. To reach base one of every two at bats is unbelievable and extremely valuable to a team. Pitchers are still careful with him and walk him regularly. He sees maybe one good pitch a game, and usually hits it.

Playing steroid-free explains only some of the reasons for his low power numbers. He is a 41-year-old man who missed all of last season with a knee injury which hasn't fully healed, he has to deal with the pressure of breaking the all-time home run records of baseball legends, and he has to play in front of booing crowds, hateful messages, and a critical media. This is the main source of Bonds' low power numbers. His mental and physical fatigue do not allow him to play at the same level of his past years, but despite this fatigue, he still gets on base half the time.

Bonds is part of the steroid era which will leave a smudge on the legacy of the American pastime. His name will be forever followed with an asterisk. But Bonds is a great hitter, regardless of his steroid use. It is a shame for Bonds, however, that greatness isn't great enough.

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One-Act Plays: Seniors Direct Identity Thieves

by ALECMCGUFFEY
Features Editor

Every year at the beginning of April, some of MBA's finest directors assemble in the theater to cast the plays that they themselves will direct. When I say directors, I am not referring to the adults who direct MBA's other fine productions. Rather, I mean the students who have been learning the ins and outs of direction and theater production for the entire year. As students of Dr. Fuller's Studio Theater class, the six student directors of this year's One-Acts have been preparing all year for the One-Acts by studying the technical and artistic elements that combine to form the experience everyone who attends these fabulous plays receives. I talked with Eric Hagemeyer, director of *The Love of Don Perlimpin and Belisa in the Garden*, to learn a little bit more about the process that goes into bringing a One-Act to the stage.

As early as the first quarter, the directors were beginning to read potential plays. "By November 1st, we had begun reading plays," Eric recalls, "and throughout the quarter, we read a huge number of possible plays. In January, our entire class performed a scene from several of the plays for Mr. Morrison, who helped us choose which plays we would ultimately direct." From there, the process became even more difficult. "In class and on my own time, I read my play a huge number of times. By the 3rd quarter, we had begun to learn the technical aspects of direction." After working diligently for three quarters, the directors met in early April to cast their plays. "It was very difficult, because after casting the plays, we only had three weeks until the performances. I had a lot of ideas for technical aspects of the play that I wanted to convey onstage, but I eventually had to sacrifice them to really get the performances that I wanted from the actors." The process culminated at the end of April, with three great performances. How did he like the experience? "It was very taxing; in the end I would describe it as very challenging but also very rewarding."

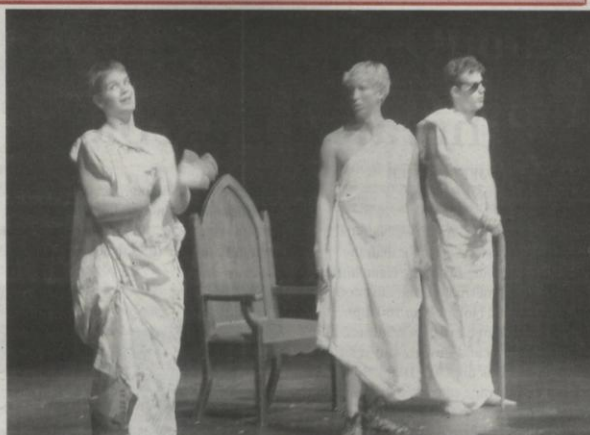
This year's theme was "Identity Thieves." The title seems easy enough to understand, but the plays chosen this year were remarkably diverse, ranging from Yeats to the ramblings of two friends eating fast food. The night started off on a somber note, with *Purgatory* directed by William Schuller followed by *The Love of Don Perlimpin and Belisa in the Garden* directed by Eric Hagemeyer. *Purgatory*, written by W.B. Yeats, was indisputably the darkest play of the night, telling the story of a father who brings his son to the abandoned house where he was born. The story ends with the startling murder of the boy (Will Holt) by the Old Man (Will Camarata), carried out convincingly with lots of fake blood. *The*

Love of Don Perlimpin and Belisa in the Garden is slightly more comedic, yet still ends with the death of a character, in this case Don Perlimpin (James Schuller). Both plays were very well-directed, carrying across the theme of identity thieves, although this idea was slightly more obvious in the latter of the two.

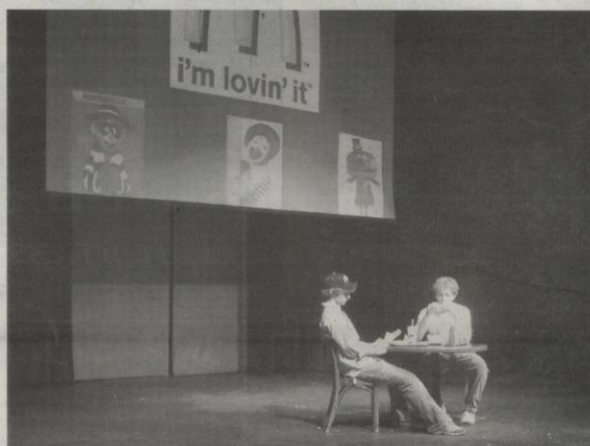
The final four One-Acts lightened the mood substantially. When I first saw Shel Silverstein's name attached to *Best Daddy* (directed by Matthew Behar), memories of my childhood emerged from the dusty corners of my mind. After all, who hasn't read *Falling Up*, *A Light in the Attic*, or *Where the Sidewalk Ends*. Thus, because of the name attached to it, I was expecting an innocent, quirky play; I turned out to be right only about the quirky part. While the play isn't dark, Clayton Lainhart's banter with his pre-teen daughter about her surprise birthday present isn't exactly pure. After joking about shooting his daughter's pony and saying that her birthday present is her sister's body, much to the horror of the daughter (played by Stephanie Rothenberg), he ends the play by admitting that it was all a big 'Birthday Fools'. *Sure Thing*, directed by Maclean Grindell, involves the 'time-traveling' Everette Barbee who gets many chances at the same conversation with a girl he meets in a café, evoking connections with the hilarious *Groundhog Day*. The satirical take on the tale of Oedipus Rex (kills his father, marries his mother), aptly titled *Oedi* and directed by Davey Douglas, was one of my favorite productions of the night. Chase Cato's attempts to spin his marriage to his mother (Anna Rose Heyman) in a positive light are only matched in hilarity by the completely random guest appearance of Ron Burgundy (Will Turner). The final play of the night succeeded in proving that the only way these six One-Acts are related is in their theme of Identity Theft. In the very well-titled play *Guys*, directed by Andy Snyder, two guys (Chase Altenbern and Alex Mazzoni) are eating in McDonald's and discussing, well, guy things, some of which probably aren't in dire need of being included in this article.

All in all, it was another successful night of student-directed plays. This year's One-Acts included more individual plays than I think have ever before been seen in one night. But because of the well-oiled productions, this is by no means a complaint. Congratulations to all who were involved, and I look forward to seeing which plays the student directors choose next year.

Alec will be next Editor-in-Chief of The Bell Ringer. Please see p.2 for more information about the editors for next year.



Seniors (l to r) Eddie Ebbert, Chase Cato, and Jimmy Flanagan in *Oedi*



Senior Alex Mazzoni and Junior Chase Altenbern in *Guys*, directed by Senior Andy Snyder

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